

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The office action of September 1, 2004 has been carefully reviewed and these remarks are responsive thereto. Reconsideration and allowance of the instant application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-88 remain pending in this application.

Applicants have amended the specification, claims and abstract to correct various informalities described therein.

Claims 1-6, 9-29, 31-36, 39-48, 50-76 and 83-88 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. patent no. 6,760,884 to Vertelney et al. ("Vertelney"). Claims 7 and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vertelney in view of U.S. patent no. 5,838,313 to Hou et al. ("Hou"). Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vertelney in view of U.S. patent no. 6,571,211 to Dwyer et al. ("Dwyer"). Claim 30 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vertelney in view of U.S. patent publication no. 2001/0031128 to Manbeck. Claim 38 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vertelney in view of Hou, as applied by claim 37, further in view of Dwyer. Claim 49 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vertelney in view of U.S. patent no. 5,689,717 to Pritt. Claims 77-82 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vertelney in view of U.S. patent no. 6,529,920 to Arons et al. ("Arons"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants are concurrently submitting a Declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 to antedate Vertelney and Manbeck. As evidenced by the declaration, applicants conceived and reduced to practice the invention of claims 1-88 prior to the earliest priority date of Vertelney and Manbeck, August 9, 1999. Accordingly, applicants submit that Vertelney and Manbeck do not qualify as prior art to the present invention.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that no fee is required for this submission. If any fees are required or if an overpayment is made, the Commissioner is authorized to debit or credit our Deposit Account No. 19-0733, accordingly.

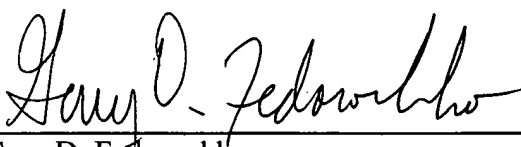
All rejections having been addressed, applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully solicit prompt notification of the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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